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2063 PROSPECTS OF A DEVELOPED AFRICA: CAPE TO CAIRO'S CALL TO HARNESSING AND UTILIZING ITS HUMAN RESOURCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper shows a glimpse of Africa's current situation and a thorough analysis of the African perception, and how it can be changed by the year 2063. The researcher holds faith in the continent's youth in the transformative process as they are the equitable "human resource" of this time. Going back in history, Africa was enslaved and later on colonised, but today the situation of yesteryear is no longer as it was. Remarkably, this change was a product of the youth in the yesteryear who fought slavery and colonisation. Be that as it may, that generation of African heroes has either passed on or is aged and weary, while Africa today, suffers from neo-slavery and neo-colonisation which require a different mindset. Harnessing and utilising the youth well, will ensure dominance through political, economic, environmental, social and technological development in Africa.

Key Words: Transformative Process, Human Resource, Colonisation, Slavery, Youth, Development

INTRODUCTION

Africa has been declared a youthful continent after a continental census recording 40% of her citizens between the age of 15-35 years and 65% of African population under 35 years (African Union, 2016). Africa's state today is abysmal, with the eastern part languishing in poverty, her southern part enmeshed in bad governance, and the western as well as the northern part in messy spillover conflicts, the whole region having poor transport networks and being affected by environmental and climate change. Rich in natural resources, her hope lays in utilising and harnessing its human resource, i.e. its youth for Africa to take off towards development as enshrined in the Agenda 2063 (African Union Youth Division, 2017).

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. An evolutionistic view of development is defined by "all-embracing and permanent process of cumulative, progressive change". Whereas in an Episodic view, "development is enlightenment enabling moving from bad life situation to a better one, to remove poverty (Gillner, 2002). Development is the modernisation of the traditional way of life (Amin, 1979)

In all these definitions Africa is not a blueprint of development since it is still to find its feet out of the traditional setup. No wonder it is stuck in poverty that affects the health facilities, high unemployment rates, high corruption, high human rights violation among other issues that challenge progressive change on the continent. However, there is hope as "no one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. There is need to get young people involved in national development processes. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death" (Annan, 1998).

THE CONDITION OF AFRICA TODAY

Africa is undeveloped and underdeveloped due to the exploitative worldly system of dependency, and the continent yearns for a significant facelift that reveals her beauty which is mostly hidden deep underneath as its natural resources and utilises its untapped human resource mainly consisting of her youth.

Poverty

Poverty precedes Africa's reputation. Most Africa nations suffer from military dictatorships, corruption, civil unrest and war, which have spilt over to underdevelopment and absolute poverty. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization reports

that 233 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were hungry/undernourished in 2014 to 2016. Out of 795 million people who were hungry worldwide, Sub-Saharan Africa was the area with the second largest number of hungry people, Asia had 512 million, principally due to the much larger population of Asia when compared to sub-Saharan Africa.” (World Hunger Organisation, 2016). In 2012, 501 million people, or 47 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa, lived on \$1.90 a day or less, a principal factor in causing widespread hunger. (World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa Poverty and Equity Data).

These statistics reflect Africa as a hopeless place stinking with poverty caused by conflict and population growth. To that effect, poverty has resulted in dilapidating health services in Africa hence the continent remains a victim of HIV/AIDS, TB, Ebola, Malaria and other diseases. Despite all this poverty, some believe that the continent is not doomed to perpetual poverty and economic slavery, Africa has immense potential. (Global Policy Forum, 2006)

Unemployment

A rising catastrophe world over has not spared the natural and human resource-rich Africa. The continent has some of the highest levels of unemployment globally. Northern Africa in 2015 had the highest unemployment rate in the world, at 12.1 per cent affecting most women and youth (International Labour Organisation, 2016). Adding on, the International Labour Organisation further notes that, over 70 per cent of workers are informally employed against the global average of 46.3 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa besides the outstanding brains that come out of that part of Africa.

However, such poor quality employment expose workers to high exploitation with limited access to social protection schemes and are often confronted by low and highly volatile earnings. A recent survey show that new jobs in both the rural and urban areas are informal with a large part of comprised of females and youth as they try to contribute to their families incomes. (African Development Bank Group, 2013)

Poor Transport System

Economics rely on transport network that is effective to enable smooth movement of commodities from primary source to the secondary till it reaches the final consumer. It's also important to free human resource i.e. the people from one point to the other for effective and efficient production. Transportation is an inclusive extreme basic need and public service among employment, education, participation in decision-making, leisure, human rights, democracy, an egalitarian society, self-reliance, and clean water (Howe & Bryceson, 2000).

Unfortunately, Africa has a poor transport network regionally with a few countries to spare such as South Africa and Ghana. Administrative ineptitude has led to this unpleasant transport network system especially in road construction. In support to this, “the indigenous leaders fail to logically and meaningfully prioritize the socioeconomic needs, or judiciously utilize the scarce resources of their countries. Rather, more often than not, more grandiose projects such as the construction of aerodromes designed to 'showcase' their fledgling politics and impress the international community are given priority over basic development projects such as road building e.g. the case of Cameroon (Njoh, 2007).

Njoh further highlights, that “despite the fact that most areas in Cameroon remain disconnected from the rest of the country because of the absence of access roads. While, a large number of other areas are linked to the rest of the country by seasonal roads that are impassable most of the year” Cameroon government boost of Garoua, Yaounde and Douala, her three aerodromes yet her airline company is almost always in financial and other troubles concerning providing any domestic air travel services.

Environment and climate change

Globalization has directed the opening up of markets all over the world increasing a fight for markets among the global economic giants to the open markets in the global south. As a result of globalisation, the continent has become a colossal dumping site for China and other western countries' substandard products causing environmental damage to Africa. To validate this claim, one has to look at places like Agbogbloshie in Ghana are a case study to environmental damage caused

by unfair trade. Researchers understand that “sometimes-illegal and environmentally damaging practices plaguing Ghana are driven by low dumping prices in comparison to the cost of recycling in the countries where it comes from” (Akbar, 2015).

More so, in Zimbabwe, the country has witnessed an unprecedented rise of ex-Japanese vehicles on the “roads which has also increased road carnage and caused traffic jams in major towns and cities” (The Sunday News, 2014). Pollution of the air and water has risen in Africa due to inferior goods dump and imported electronic waste leaks lead, mercury, arsenic, zinc and flame-retardants to the environment causing climate change, for example, the recent El Nino and La Nina. It is but a sad reality that Africa is turning into a graveyard for e-waste and cheap goods which pose harm to its development by limiting its environmental potential.

Poor governance

Governance refers to the administration of a particular place be it a communal area, urban area, nation, region or even global. Global governance involves Poverty Reduction Strategy, sustainable development, and wealth creation among others listed in the Sustainable Development Goals. Nonetheless, rich developed countries continuously exhibit their greater performance due to good governance (Kaufmann, 2005). There is a solid stand that governance and institutions affect growth performance of Africa (World Bank, 2005).

In light of the above, Africa poor governance has led to some of the mentioned continental conditions thriving through corruption, political instability, ineffective rule of laws and institutions ending to reduced economic growth. Some African countries, e.g. Zambia “went through governance failures and corruption at some point in time but their governance capacity made them recover and ensure the maintenance of rapid growth performance through constant demands to improve government and reduce corruption. However, this could not happen if governance capacity was poor and non-sustainable” notes (Resta, 2005). Khan, (2006) understands the need to learn from other countries viable governance strategies that ensure restructuring to suitable African conditions to promote sustainable growth performance.

ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

A glimpse of the dilapidated condition of Africa needs an eagle eyes' perspective to see beyond the mess since short-sightedness can leave Africans in despair. The world is evolving into the digital age thus a new mindset is required to proffer sustainable development. By large, it is the youths that have the technological know-how compared to the previous generation. Meanwhile, this is an advantage to Africa since most of its population is youthful and is surrounding by vast of untapped land that governments can use to develop agriculture and industries.

Moreover, the potential of youth in development has been recognised world over. The Youth Strategy (2014–2017) was developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to appeal to the youth encouraging them to grow into more involvement and commitment towards development processes. The strategy was called “Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future”, and it was in line with the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Youth (2013) which resulted in the publication of “Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle: A Good Practice Guide”. Indeed it was “UNDP's first review of programming strategies for youth political participation beyond the ballot box”. In the same line, UNDP launched a Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace, i.e. Youth-GPS (2016–2020) to set a global appreciation of the youth in development than was before.

More so, the African Union's Agenda 2063 embraced the youth in development issues. In response, the 2017 AU theme, “harness the demographic dividend through investments in the youth” set precedence to prepare the African youth to develop the continent. However, it is worthy to note that they will not be anything to develop or lead tomorrow, if the youth of today sit, complain and do nothing about Africa's current situation today. The primary task African youth have, is to carry forward the unity which the youth of yesterday brought through political, economic and social independence that ensured the forming of Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU). The youth today should focus on

political, economic, social and technological growth to make way for development possibly by 2063.

The youth are the under-utilised human resource of the rich continent. Undoubtedly, enculturation, i.e. fusing an American or European way of doing things have modernised the thinking of many youths especially those in urban areas. African culture suffers immensely to this arrangement, but the brighter side of it is that the first step to development is to change the way one thinks as unpacked by Jampolsky & Cirincione, (1994). The world is continuously modernising through globalisation thus a modernised mindset quickly adjust or even set the pace in the change henceforth with this development Africa has a chance to lead the world into modernity with the backing of its abundant natural resources.

Furthermore, a shift of political development is gradually getting into place. The youth, women and children have for years suffered through corrupt deeds, uncontrolled corruption and poor governance all these as a result of politics. However, recently, the clarion call has reached its apex with many youths getting involved in political activism as a way to be involved and change the political processes in Africa. For example, the Arab Spring in Northern Africa of 2011, #ThisFlag and Occupy Africa Unity Square in Zimbabwe as well as Le Balai Citoyen in Burkina Faso. Undoubtedly, Africa is about to have a generational evolution as it has experienced “Pan African generation” followed by “Nationalist generation” now the “Globalist generation” to the “Renascent generation” in its politics mainstay that has influenced Africa to be where it is at the moment (Moyo, 2004). Globalist and Renascent generations may lead Africa to an Africa it wants that sets a pace in economic growth.

Also, industry growth is a major boost to, and it is where the continents legs behind from Europe and America. According to Lewis (1960)'s two-sector model, economic development involves a shift from traditional (agriculture) to modern (industrialisation). Be that as it may, African economy is in the traditional setup whereas developed countries like Canada, America, Japan among others are industrial. However, the youth have the capability of industrialising by uniting efforts and innovations, e.g. African Development Bank that is meant to fund and invest in African entrepreneurs, thus creating a fusion of both the traditional and modern setup. Africa may become economically indomitable with all the untapped raw materials processed in Africa and the finished product being sold in each corner of the world, that way, Africa becomes a typical model of development.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Nonetheless, prospects of a developed Africa are impossible if the continent remains dependent to the global north, has high rates of human rights violation, poor governance and continuous ignorance to youth economically, socially and politically investment. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the regional bodies and countries per se should adopt youth and environmental protectionism policy to avoid its youth and the environment from being overexploited since these carry the hope of African development.

Moreover, political economy must fall under our system of governance as individual African countries cascading up to our regional bodies. The political economy becomes stronger due to the corruption culture that we have developed as Africans. Yes, Africa is in poverty, but the “Survival of the fittest” mentality makes her gullible to all sorts of oppression especially from the global north and better countries within the continent. Thus, the researcher recommends the need to end the system of governance that divides Africans especially its youth by adopting a transformative, merit and progressive based way of governance, i.e. is free from partisanship, nepotism, corruption and personal gain.

To conclude, Africa is not so far from becoming the modern example of the world. By investing and harnessing in its youth with the backing of the vast, abundant natural resources, the development prospects of Africa are nigh. However, the deplorable state of Africa today to some extent illusions Africa's vision of Agenda 2063 as a mere pipedream. By large, Africa needs to understand that “until the lion knows how to write, every story will glorify the hunter” insinuating that only Africans can determine their destiny.

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